

**REMARKS**

Claims 2, 16, and 21 are pending in the application.

Claims 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukuhara, JP 2000-171115 (“Fukuhara”).

Claims 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Mori, JP 08027333, further in view of Fukumoto, JP 61060302 (“Fukumoto”), or in the alternative over Fukumoto further in view of Mori.

Claim 16 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Fukuhara further in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the “admitted” Prior Art.

Claim 16 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over either one of (a) Mori in view of Fukumoto or (b) Fukumoto in view of Mori, as applied in claim 2 above, and further in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the “admitted” prior art (page 5, lines 13-15).

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not rendered obvious over the disclosures of Fukuhara; Mori further in view of Fukumoto; Fukumoto further in view of Mori; Fukuhara in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the “admitted” Prior Art; Mori in view of Fukumoto, or Fukumoto in view of Mori further in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the “admitted” prior art and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner asserts that the claims define a rubber composition layer “comprising” a rubber component - this language does not exclude the inclusion of reinforcing elements and as

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such, the Examiner views the belt layer of Fukuhara as a squeegee rubber composition layer within Applicants' claimed invention.

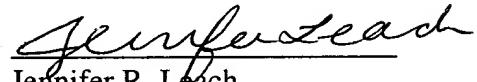
Claim 2 has been amended to recite that the "at least one squeegee rubber composition layer adjoining to the composite layer and consisting of a squeegee rubber composition of which the rubber component comprises a natural rubber and/or a synthetic isoprene rubber in the amount of 50% by weight or more." Claim 21 has been added which is essentially drawn to the same subject matter of claim 2, but which recites the transitional phrase "consisting essentially of." Accordingly, the present invention would not be obvious over Fukuhara, JP 2000-171115 ("Fukuhara"), over Mori, JP 08027333, further in view of Fukumoto, JP 61060302 ("Fukumoto"), or in the alternative over Fukumoto further in view of Mori, over Fukuhara further in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the "admitted" Prior Art, or over either one of (a) Mori in view of Fukumoto or (b) Fukumoto in view of Mori, as applied in claim 2, and further in view of Kobayashi, Nosu, and the "admitted" prior art (page 5, lines 13-15). Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jennifer R. Leach  
Registration No. 54,257

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
**23373**  
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